(b) what are these other irritants and whether Government have identified them; and

(c) whether Government propose to remove such irritants to streamline smooth flow of trade between the two countries, and if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) India and Nepal have signed a Treaty of Trade in order to expand bilateral trade and encourage collaboration in economic development. Periodic talks are held at various levels to review the operation of the Treaty with the objective of removing any operational problems that may arise from time to time. There is no major problems at present.

Import of edible oil by STC

1800. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have granted permission to import edible oil to State Trading Corporation and National Dairy Development Board;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that STC was asked to import 1,50,000 tonnes of palmolein oil;

(c) if so, whether it is a fact that till the end of June'94 STC had entered into an agreement to import only 25,000 tonnes of edible oil;

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(e) whether it is also a fact that due to above circumstances, the prices of edible oil, have risen by Rs. 2.00 per kg. in the month of June 1994?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. While STC has been authorised for import of RBD Palmolein for public distribution system, Deptt. of Agriculture and Co-operation has intimated that it has been decided in April, 1994 to permit NDDB to import Palmolein at concessional duty towards part reimbursement for the losses incurred by it under Market Intervention Operations (MIO) during 1991-92 and 1992-93.

(b) Initially, STC is importing sufficient quantities for meeting PDS requirements. So far it has contracted for import of 1.08 lakh tonnes of Palmolein.

(c) During the current financial year, STC had finalised contracts for import of 60,000 MT of RBD Palmolein by the end of June, 1994.

(d) STC has finalised contracts for import of 1,08,000 MTs of Palmolein for shipments during July to October 1994. As on 3.8.1994, STC had a stock of 11,853 MTs of Palmolein which has to be lifted by the states on authorisation of Deptt. of Civil Supplies.

(e) The Central Issue Price of Palmolein supplied to States/UTs for distrbition through PDS has been increased by Rs. 2,000/- per tonne in July, 1994.

Import of gold by MMTC

1801. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MMTC propose to import gold;

(b) if so, the quantity of gold likely to be imported by MMTC and the reasons therefor;

(c) the present stock position of gold with MMTC;

(d) whether the import will have any price check on gold in the market; and